

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed on September 20, 2007, the Office took the following action: (1) objected to claim 24 as having an informality; (2) rejected claims 1, 13, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement; (3) rejected claims 34-40 under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter; (4) rejected claims 1-10, 12-31, 33-35, 37-40 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Schuetze et al., U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2003/0110181 (hereinafter "Schuetze"); and (5) rejected claim 36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schuetze in view of Bowman et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,169,986 (hereinafter "Bowman"). Applicant respectfully traverses and further requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in light of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Claim Objections

The Office objected to claim 24 as having an informality in the phrase "The computer-readable medium of recited in claim 22." Applicant has amended the phrase to read "The computer-readable medium of claim 22." Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection to claim 22.

In addition, Applicant has amended claim 7 *sua sponte* to correct an informality. Claim 7, as amended now recites "the multi-type data objects, at least two of the related data objects." Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration of amended claim 7.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

The Office rejected claims 1, 13, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Office states, “Specifically, there is no mention of a ‘search term suggestion component’ in the specification.” (Office Action, page 2, line 13 to page 3, line 2). Applicant has amended claims 1, 13, and 22 to recite “a search term suggestion module,” which is described throughout the specification, such as on page 11, though this citation is not necessarily limiting. The search term suggestion (STS) module is described with reference to element 212 in Fig. 2. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 1, 13, and 22.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §101

The Office rejected claims 34-40 under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. More specifically, the Office states “the instant claims are directed to software *per se*.” (Office Action, page 3, lines 5). The Office notes “the instant claims are not limited to statutory subject matter and are therefore non-statutory.” (*Id.*, lines 8-9).

Applicant has amended claim 34 to clarify the intended subject matter. Specifically, Applicant has amended claim 34 to recite “a system.” Claims 35-40 depend from base claim 34, and are believed allowable based on their dependency to base claim 34. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 34-40

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Office rejected claims 1-10, 12-31, 33-35, 37-40 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Schuetze. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1

Claim 1, as amended, recites:

A computer-implemented method comprising:

determining a bid term, the bid term associated with multi-type data objects;

identifying relationships among the multi-type data objects, wherein the multi-type data objects comprise at least one object of a first type and at least one object of a second type different from the first type;

iteratively clustering the multi-type data by at least one of the identified relationships to generate reinforced clusters; and

utilizing, by a search term suggestion module, the reinforced clusters to respond to the bid term from a user with search terms relevant to the bid term.

Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze does not disclose every element of Applicant's amended claim 1, which is required to uphold a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 (MPEP 2131). Applicant has amended claim 1 by including recitations from claim 36. Therefore claim 1 now recites "determining a bid term, the bid term associated with multi-type data objects." The Office acknowledges in the rejection of claim 36 that "Schuetze et al. do not teach suggesting search terms in response to a bid term." (Office Action, page 20, lines 16-17). Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze fails to disclose every element of amended claim 1.

In addition, Applicant has amended claim 1 to clarify the intended subject matter. Claim 1 now recites “by at least one of the identified relationships.” In addition, claim 1 recites “the reinforced clusters to respond to the bid term from a user with search terms relevant to the bid term.” Applicant requests the Office to reconsider each recitation in light of the clarifying amendments presented herein.

Claims 2-12 depend from claim 1, and thus are believed allowable at least for their dependency on the allowable base claim 1. Further, the additional limitations in these dependant claims provide limitations which are not taught by the cited references. Although all dependant claims may recite limitations not disclosed by the cited references, only dependant claim 12 is discussed below for sake of brevity.

Claim 12 recites “responsive to comparing, identifying one or more *search term suggestions*; and *communicating* the search term suggestions to the user.” The Office relies on Schuetze at paragraph [0171] and Fig. 12 as disclosing “search term suggestions.” The relevant text from Schuetze is provided below for convenience.

[0171] A snapshot of the screen displaying *five returned text clusters* 1216, 1218, 1220, 1222, and 1224 is shown in the left half of FIG. 12. *These clusters are the clusters closest to the query terms.* The most frequent content terms in each cluster are displayed to represent each cluster. The user can scroll each text window to view additional representative terms for a text cluster. The user decides to scatter the first text cluster containing the terms “ancient” and “cathedral” again based on text. To do so, the user selects a checkbox 1226 next to the desired cluster and subsequently depresses a “text cluster” button 1228. As described above, this causes the system to refine the existing selected cluster into smaller separate clusters.

(Schuetze, page 14, paragraph [0171], emphasis added). Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze fails to disclose identifying one or more search term suggestions” and “communicating the search term suggestions to the user.” Instead, Schuetze discloses

returning text clusters from query terms. However, the “returned text clusters” are not equivalent to “one or more search term suggestions” as recited in claim 12.

An analysis of Fig. 12, elements 1216, 1218, 1220, 1222, and 1224 show each of these “clusters” as strings of text. For example, element 1216 includes, “nent ge church georgian stone cathedral” and is labeled “text cluster 1.” These text clusters are not search term suggestions. In fact, the string of text “nent ge church georgian stone cathedral” is far from a *search term suggestion* for the query words “ancient cathedral” associated with reference 1214. Applicant is unsure how the text “nent ge” is even vaguely related to the query words “ancient cathedral,” much less a search term suggestion. Therefore, Applicant submits that Schuetze fails to disclose a “search term suggestion,” and therefore cannot disclose “communicating the search term suggestions to the user.”

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 1-12.

Claim 13

Claim 13 recites in part: “utilizing, by a search term suggestion module, the reinforced clusters to respond to a bid term from a user with search terms relevant to the bid term.” Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze fails to disclose “a bid term” and “search terms,” as recited in claim 13. As discussed above regarding claim 1, the Office acknowledges that “Schuetze et al. do not teach suggesting search terms in response to a bid term.” Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze fails to disclose every element of amended claim 13.

Claims 14-21 depend from claim 13, and thus are believed allowable at least for their dependency on the allowable base claim 13. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 13-21.

Claim 22

Applicant relies on at least similar reasoning as presented above regarding claim 13 in support of claim 22. In particular, claim 22 recites in part: “utilizing, by a search term suggestion module, the reinforced clusters to respond to a bid term from a user with search terms relevant to the bid term.” Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze fails to disclose every element of amended claim 22.

Claims 23-33 depend from claim 22, and thus are believed allowable at least for their dependency on the allowable base claim 22. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 22-33.

Claim 34

Claim 34 recites in part: “means for utilizing the reinforced clusters to respond to a bid term from a user with search terms relevant to the bid term.” Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze fails to disclose “a bid term” and “search terms,” as recited in claim 34. As discussed above regarding claim 1, the Office acknowledges that “Schuetze et al. do not teach suggesting search terms in response to a bid term.” Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze fails to disclose every element of amended claim 34.

Claims 35 and 37-40 depend from claim 34, and thus are believed allowable at least for their dependency on the allowable base claim 34. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 34-35 and 37-40.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office rejected claim 36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schuetze in view of Bowman. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Applicant respectfully submits that Schuetze and Bowman, either singularly or in combination, assuming *arguendo* that such combination is proper, fail to teach each recitation in claim 1, as is required by MPEP 2143 to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Claim 36 depends from claim 34 and thus includes each recitation of base claim 34.

Applicant submits that Schuetze and Bowman fail to teach each recitation of claim 34. In particular, Applicant submits that Schuetze and Bowman fail to teach “utilizing means to use the reinforced clusters to respond to a bid term from a user with search terms relevant to the bid term,” as recited in claim 34.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claim 36.

Conclusion

Claims 1-40 are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and issuance of the subject application. If there are any remaining matters that may be handled by telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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